



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services



Michael P. Nolin
Commissioner

March 22, 2006

Senator Robert Letourneau, Chairman
Transportation & Interstate Cooperation Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 104
Concord, NH 03301

Subject: HB 1307 relative to application requirements for motor vehicle recycling yard licenses

Dear Chairman Letourneau and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1307. This bill seeks to require all applicants for a local license to operate a motor vehicle salvage yard (MVSY) pursuant to RSA 236:111-129 to certify in the application that the facility complies with best management practices, established by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES), for motor vehicle recyclers. DES supports passage of this legislation because it will help protect local water, soil, and air quality by reinforcing the need to operate MVSYs in an environmentally responsible manner.

The motor vehicle recycling industry is the leading recycling industry in the United States. MVSYs are responsible for recycling between 75% and 85% (by weight) of the material content of millions of vehicles annually. This contributes significantly toward conserving natural resources and reducing the demand for landfill capacity.

Although MVSYs fulfill a vital role in automobile recycling, a poorly operated MVSY can have a serious adverse impact on environmental quality. MVSYs handle many hazardous substances including gasoline, diesel fuel, motor and other oils, anti-freeze, and various solvents. When spilled or leaked on the ground, as often happens at a poorly operated MVSY, the fluids can contaminate groundwater, surface water, and soils. In addition to hazardous fluids, MVSY operators also handle a number of other pollutants, including mercury from light switches, ABS brake systems, and headlamps; sodium azide from air bag cartridges; lead in wheel weights and lead acid batteries; and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) from air conditioning systems. When a MVSY does not employ best management practices for handling those materials, the pollutants can have an adverse impact on the environment, public health, and safety.

In 1999, the DES began working in partnership with the N.H. Auto & Truck Recyclers Association (Association) to improve environmental practices at MVSYs throughout the state. Initially, the Department concentrated on learning how the motor vehicle recycling industry operates in order to develop best management practices that are both reasonable and protective of the environment. In 2002, the Department launched Phase I of its award-winning "N.H. Green Yards Program" to begin institutionalizing best management practices using a variety of education, training, and technical assistance tools at 200 MVSYs throughout the state.

Phase I of the N.H. Green Yards Program is now nearing its end with an increased effort in on-site technical assistance. For the past several months, specially trained DES inspectors have

been visiting all known MVSYS to evaluate how well the operators are implementing best management practices and to help them recognize aspects of their operations that need improvement. Later this year, those technical assistance visits will transition into a second phase. In Phase II, DES will train MVSYS operators to audit their operations on a regular basis using a checklist supplied by DES and to annually submit written certification affirming consistency with best management practices. Since RSA 236:111-129 specifies that municipalities shall license MVSYS, it makes good sense to require MVSYS operators to provide the same certification to local licensing officials so that local government is assured that applicants are mindful of the need to protect local drinking water supplies and other natural resources in the community.

If you have any questions regarding this letter of testimony, please contact Tony Giunta at 271-2905.

Sincerely,



Michael P. Nolin
Commissioner

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